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Chairman: Mr. de Rojas ..... (Venezuela)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 97: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation (*continued*)

(d) International migration and development, including the convening of a United Nations conference on international migration and development

Panel discussion on international migration and development

1. **Mr. Desai** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), acting as moderator of the panel, introduced the panellists as follows: Mr. Purcell (International Organization for Migration), Ms. Jasso (New York University), Ms. Monsod (University of the Philippines) and Mr. Diouf (University of St. Louis, Dakar).

2. **Mr. Chamie** (Director, Population Division) said that, in a population context, international migration, along with fertility and mortality, was one of the building blocks of population change. Many political revolutions had taken place over the past century, but the population revolution represented by the demographic transition from high to low rates of both fertility and mortality had been one of the greatest achievements of mankind.

3. Population statistics showed that high life expectancy generally went along with a low birth rate. In regions such as Africa, great progress had been made in lowering the death rates over a relatively short period of time, but corresponding birth rates had declined more slowly; that had resulted in rapid population growth. The rate of population growth was expected to level off in the twenty-third century, by which time the world population was expected to be about 11 billion. As a consequence there would be changes in the world age structure, with an overall ageing of the world population.

4. The question of migration was more difficult to address from a population viewpoint, however. There was little knowledge of that subject, because it was harder to gather data on migration than on general population issues, and much misinformation. Moreover, public policy and sentiment surrounding migration often coloured research efforts. The general impression was that people were leaving developing countries and going to developed countries, yet that was only partly supported by the available data. In five industrialized European countries, well below half of migrants originated in developing countries, while in Canada and the United States of America, over half of migrants did.

5. In conclusion, the general lack of sound data on migration resulted in a lack of theoretical frameworks to explain the complex relationship between migration and development. The impact of migration was perhaps heightened in developed countries because of their zero population growth rates. While the positive contributions that migrants could make to development must be recognized, Governments of sending and receiving countries alike should strive to make remaining in one's own country a viable option for all.

6. **Mr. Purcell** (International Organization for Migration) said that while the motivations for migration had remained essentially the same throughout history, the number of countries involved had increased. Currently, virtually every country had become part of a global migratory flow system, either as a sending, transit or receiving country, and remittances from migrant workers amounted to $70 billion per year, surpassing the total of all official development assistance. Since many Governments viewed migration as a destabilizing factor, it had become a political issue.

7. There were two myths about migration widely accepted: first, that migrants moved from developing countries to developed countries and, second, that the flow of migrants and the proportion of migrants to the population was growing. In fact, 55 per cent of migrants from developing countries were living in other developing countries and the overall proportion of migrants had remained stable for the past 30 years, at approximately 2.3 per cent of the world population.

8. However, in recent years several changes had occurred. Not only were migrants increasingly skilled workers or people with capital, but growing numbers were in the countries of destination illegally. Moreover, so-called irregular migration of criminals and traffickers had become a significant factor. Forced displacement because of environmental factors was also becoming more common. Finally, the globalization of the economy and trade liberalization had led to increased flows of service providers.

9. Migration was increasingly linked to labour mobility resulting from regional integration and in areas undergoing rapid economic expansion. Progress in development had often lessened migrant outflows, while lack of development had spurred them. At the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development, population experts had come together to draft the outlines of a global migration strategy, which included components to harmonize international trade, investment and aid policies, appropriate Government migration structures and increased legal opportunities for migration. To improve the situation of migrants,

Governments should seek more information and reliable data on the realities of the phenomenon. Basic education to upgrade marketable skills and efforts to facilitate the return of migrants were also needed. The rights of individuals must also be protected through the ratification of the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

10. Significant migration was likely to continue well into the twenty-first century, and it was therefore up to the international community to decide whether it would be a positive or negative factor in growth and development.

11. **Ms. Jasso** (New York University) noted that migration had had major consequences throughout history; for example, the spread of agriculture during the neolithic period had probably resulted from the introduction of new farming techniques by migrants. Factors to be taken into account in establishing a general framework for the study of migration included the identity of migrants and their reasons for leaving; whether those people remained in the destination country or returned home; the extent and pace of their adaptation to life in the destination country; and the characteristics of those who remained in the country of origin and the nationals of the destination country. The combination of two fundamental human impulses – the evolutionary propensity to move and the evolutionary propensity to distrust newcomers, who frequently brought disease, famine and war – often gave rise to tension.

12. In order to improve the data on migration it would be important to take probability samples of migrants' legal status, which determined their options in the new society, including their opportunities to find work. It would also be necessary to monitor the adaptation of those migrants over time and to see whether they eventually moved back to their countries of origin. Migration history was another key factor. It was known that individuals with a propensity to move tended to do so repeatedly, if only within the same country. The framework for study must include information on the migrant's family and/or household. "Family" and "household" should be defined as broadly as possible; in some cases, they might mean immediate family and, in others, a larger, more extended family, including relatives who might have acted as sponsors.

13. Information on the sponsor was another vital but often neglected element. It had generally been assumed that the reunification of families was the main motive for migration, yet in fact, in the United States of America, most sponsors were American citizens wishing to marry foreign-born persons. It would be useful to learn more about such sponsors and whether their marriages were more or less stable than marriages between two American citizens. Data should also be obtained on their children, who would have the special status of "twenty-first century transnationals" raised in two cultures.

14. The United States and Australia had recently initiated longitudinal studies of legal immigrants, which would serve as models for other receiving countries. Those studies included the probability samples and the long-term monitoring she had mentioned earlier. In the United States, such studies had revealed that the level of schooling of immigrants had tended to be severely underestimated; whereas it had been thought, based on census data, that only 6 per cent of Mexican-born adults were college graduates, the figure obtained in the new longitudinal study was more than twice as high. With regard to border enforcement, the new studies had shown, for the first time, that immigrants who entered the country illegally tended to remain longer than legal temporary visitors.

15. A second initiative had been a binational study, carried out by 20 social scientists from Mexico and the United States; they had been divided into five teams which had studied five different aspects of migration. To the surprise of some government officials, all five teams had agreed on the strong and weak aspects of the available data, and, for the first time, a single state-of-the-art estimate on the size of the unauthorized Mexican-born population in the United States had been produced.

16. The fundamental challenge for future policy makers would be to ensure that their information bases were sound. She hoped that they would consider using the longitudinal and binational studies she had described.

17. **Mr. Diouf** (University of St. Louis, Dakar) said that the first form of international migration from Africa had been slavery in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The contribution of the slaves to the development of the United States was an example of the relationship between migration and development of the destination country.

18. A lesser known aspect of African migration was inter-African migration, where countries fell into three categories: net exporters of migrants; net importers and countries that were both importers and exporters of migrants, such as Nigeria and Senegal. Inter-African migration reflected the relationship between migration and development. In recent years, economic growth in Côte d'Ivoire, a net importer of migrant plantation workers from Burkina Faso, had been based on cocoa and coffee exports. In Libya, which had suffered from a shortage of labour, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, the influx of manual workers from Egypt and teachers from sub-Saharan Africa -- many of whom

worked under binational agreements – had contributed to the absorption of capital acquired by that country during the oil boom. The economy of South Africa had long been based on the mining industry, which employed workers from many neighbouring countries, including Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland, Malawi, Angola, Mozambique and even Zaire.

19. Net exporters of migrants had also benefited from the phenomenon. Cape Verde, an arid country with no natural resources, relied on remittances from abroad to support its economy. In fact, the bulk of its population lived and worked abroad. Thanks to those remittances, its per capita income was equal to or even greater than that of Senegal and it consistently registered a surplus in its balance of payments. The growth of the national income of Burkina Faso, Senegal and Mali was also dependent on remittances from abroad; a portion of that revenue was invested in agriculture, particularly in irrigation equipment.

20. Expulsion from the destination country was characteristic of African migration. African workers from Zaire, Mali and Senegal were regularly deported from France. Less well known was the fact that migrants were expelled from one African country to another: in 1983, for example, 2 million Ghanaians had been expelled from Nigeria and in 1992 Sahelians had been expelled from Zambia. Those expulsions had taken place despite the fact that the countries concerned were signatories of treaties whose provisions guaranteed the free movement of persons. Moreover, such expulsions frequently involved violence and the confiscation of property.

21. **Ms. Monsod** (University of the Philippines) said that while barriers to the movement of goods and capital had been coming down, barriers to the movement of people had increased or remained in place. Whereas in 1976, only 13 per cent of the world's countries had had immigration policies; by 1995, the number of countries with policies that discouraged immigration had risen to 66.

22. Although the migration rate in Asia (4 per 10,000 people), was lower than that of both Latin America and Africa, the population was large in absolute terms, Asia accounted for 60 per cent of the migration from developing countries. Refugees, however, accounted for a smaller percentage of migrants from Asia than from Africa and Latin America.

23. One half of Asian migrant workers were females originating from regions with a very high incidence of poverty. Female workers generally earned less because they were engaged in domestic work but sent a greater share of their earnings home.

24. The beneficial impact of migration in Asia included an increase in wages (for example, in Pakistan and South Korea in the 1970s, the outflow of workers had driven up wages). Migration also relieved domestic frustration and spared Asian countries from the political instability that resulted from unemployment or, as was the case in the Philippines, undesirable employment. In countries such as Pakistan and Thailand, where most migrants were from the agricultural sector, labour-saving devices acquired with money from remittances compensated for the loss in manpower. The greatest impact of migration was on access to foreign exchange. In Bangladesh, remittances were equivalent to 40 per cent of export earnings; in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, they were equivalent to more than 25 per cent of export earnings; and in the Philippines, they were equivalent to 25 per cent of export earnings. Some countries, such as Indonesia, actually factored perspective remittances into their medium-term economic plans. In the Philippines, remittances accounted for 30 per cent of household income.

25. There were three types of migration policy: assimilation of migrants with full retention of cultural identity and practices (Canada and the United States of America); assimilation into the host culture (France); and the segregation of migrants through such measures as temporary residence rights; the limitation of family reunions; the restriction of opportunities for naturalization; and limited social, cultural, economic and political participation. Unfortunately, that policy was most common in the Asian countries, which, in effect, discriminated against migrants who were fellow Asians.

26. Since there seemed to be many obstacles preventing the United Nations from holding a conference on international migration and development, the best solution would be for labour-importing and labour-exporting countries to undertake negotiations on a bilateral or subregional basis. In that regard, the International Labour Organization had assisted in the organization of round tables in Asia. The Philippines, for its part, had endeavoured to help migrant workers by sending labour attachés to receiving countries, preventing the emigration of women under a certain age and forming support organizations in the receiving countries.

27. **Mr. Wardana** (Indonesia) said that the contribution of international labour migration to his country's economy was negative or insignificant, since remittances from Indonesians working abroad were far outweighed by the total cost of foreign workers to Indonesia's economy. His Government was concerned about the potential impact – negative as well as positive – of international migration on both sending and receiving countries and wondered how the

international community, through the United Nations, could deal with the issue with a view to contributing to the development process of both sending and receiving countries.

28. **Mr. Lozano** (Mexico), referring to the recommendations on methods of promoting conditions for the favourable return of migrants to their countries of origin and promoting stable conditions in such countries in order to reduce migration flows, wondered whether any other proposals or recommendations could be envisaged, especially in view of the declining population growth rates in some receiving countries. He would welcome additional information on the limitations or prospects of the proposed binational programmes intended to secure reliable statistics on the phenomenon of migration.

29. **Mr. Ba** (Senegal) said that migrants definitely made a contribution to the economies of receiving countries and often performed work that was spurned by the local inhabitants. Unfortunately, they had little or no social protection, worked under deplorable conditions and were paid a pittance. He would welcome some statistics on the contributions of migrants to the economies of host countries.

30. **Mr. Ojimba** (Nigeria) said that an international conference on migration needed to be organized in order to enable countries to draw up policies that took into account the human element of international migration.

31. **Ms. Ubeda** (Costa Rica) said that it was imperative to know how migration could be a factor in development. A recent gathering of Governments of Central American States in San Jose on the issue of migration and asylum had concluded, among other things, that migration should be considered in a holistic manner. While the lack of reliable statistics was certainly a crucial factor when it came to managing migration, Governments had to look at other sets of factors to help them deal with the issue. In that regard, she wondered what other instruments could be used by Governments in developing public policy in the absence of computer-generated quantitative and qualitative data on migration, especially illegal migration. She would also like to know whether there was any international instrument governing forced migration, and what help, if any, international organizations could provide on that issue of migration, especially in the Central American region.

32. **Mr. Cabactulan** (Philippines) wondered whether there were any supply and demand analysis models that clearly indicated the contributions of low wage-earning migrants to the increase in the per capita incomes of the nationals of the receiving countries. He also wished to know more about the social costs and benefits of migration. It was imperative for the international community to ensure that definitive regional and subregional activities were undertaken in order to examine the complex issue of international migration, including the issue of convening an international conference on development.

33. **Mr. Perez** (Dominican Republic) said that 99 per cent of the more than 1 million immigrants in his country came from developing countries. Most emigrants from the Dominican Republic went to the United States of America; it was estimated that they sent back home $1 billion a year, a substantial contribution to the United States economy. It would be interesting to try to establish a pilot programme with the assistance of the United Nations and the sending and receiving countries to see what arrangements could be made for those migrants who wished to return to their countries of origin, to do so. In that regard, he wished to know how many Dominican Republic nationals presently resided in the United States of America.

34. **Mr. Purcell** (International Organization for Migration), responding to comments concerning how migration could be treated in the future, said studies had found that migrants had made substantial contributions to their own countries and to the host countries. Yet, because of the growing phenomenon of irregular migration, those positive contributions tended to go unrecognized. The Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development had put forward a four-part comprehensive programme on the issue and had noted that if receiving and sending countries cooperated, it should be possible for every person to remain in his or her own country and survive.

35. It had recognized that receiving Governments had the right to determine who should be allowed to enter their countries. With regard to unregulated migration, the Programme of Action had emphasized that it was the responsibility of all countries to receive their own nationals back as citizens and had pointed to the need for assistance to countries with their reintegration efforts.

36. The Cairo Conference also had called on countries to address human rights and humanitarian issues pertaining to migrants. Unfortunately, the political will to implement the comprehensive policies contained in the Programme of Action was still lacking.

37. However, recent initiatives in some regions pointed to a willingness to adopt a comprehensive approach to migration issues which acknowledged both the constructive and destabilizing effects of migration and the need to take corrective measures to ensure respect for migrants.

38. **Ms. Jasso** (New York University) said that the impact of migrants on receiving countries could be measured in social and demographic as well as in economic terms. To her knowledge the most comprehensive framework for assessing the impact of immigration was to be found in a two-year study by the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America of the economic, demographic and social impact of immigration to that country. That excellent framework drew every relevant distinction, such as between the short- and long-term impacts and between the economic and fiscal impacts. The estimates of the impacts were the best currently available, although they relied on existing data, which were incomplete. The study had revealed that the combined impact of all types of immigration to the United States was positive in net terms, that some nationals were displaced from jobs by migrants and that consumers, owners of capital and persons employed in businesses established by migrants gained from immigration.

39. It was true that the study she had described earlier was a model for two countries and that difficulties might arise if the same approach were applied to more than two countries. However, those involved in the study believed that the format provided an ideal tool whereby groups of countries involved in mutual migration streams could draw upon all available sets of data.

40. **Mr. Diouf** (University of St. Louis, Dakar) said that it would be interesting to learn whether there was any data on the net contribution of foreign workers to the Indonesian economy.

41. **Ms. Monsod** (University of the Philippines), replying to the representative of Senegal, said that according to one study migrant workers increased the per capita gross domestic product of nationals of receiving countries, reduced costs in labour-intensive sectors and cushioned the impact of unemployment on native labourers, since migrant workers were the first to be fired in a downturn or economic crisis. A study in Canada had shown that immigrants created at least as many jobs as they themselves filled, that they created a demand for additional goods and services and that on average, they earned substantially less than nationals. The major effect of a large inflow of immigrants would be to reduce the wages of immigrants who had arrived earlier. A study in the United Kingdom had shown that the proportion of taxes paid by immigrants was comparable to their consumption of public services, thus dispelling the myth that migrants were a net burden on fiscal reserves.

42. Immigration obviously increased population growth in receiving countries; in the United States of America, immigrants accounted for approximately 37 per cent of the population growth. With regard to the social impact of migration on receiving countries, she noted that the educational level of migrants often was high by the standards of the source country and comparable to the level of the host country. A study in Canada had revealed that 38 per cent of recent Asian immigrants had received a university education, compared with 15 per cent of the Canadian population as a whole.

(i) Cultural development (*continued*) (A/C.2/52/L.10)

43. **Mr. Mwakapugi** (United Republic of Tanzania), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.10) on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, drew particular attention to the first and fourth preambular paragraphs and to paragraphs 2, 3, 5 and 6. He expressed the hope that the Committee would lend its support to the draft resolution.

Agenda item 99: Operational activities for development (*continued*)

(b) Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries (*continued*) (A/C.2/52/L.9)

44. **Mr. Mwakapugi** (United Republic of Tanzania), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.9) on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, drew attention to various provisions of the draft resolution and urged the members of the Committee to support its adoption.

45. **Ms. Suzuki** (Japan) welcomed the initiative by the Group of 77 and China regarding South-South cooperation and said that her delegation would participate actively in the consultations on the draft resolution.

Organization of work

46. **Ms. Kelley** (Secretary of the Committee), replying to a question from Mr. Mwakapugi, said that the report of the Secretary-General called for in paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 51/171 had been issued in combination with the report of the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations called for in paragraph 7 of the same resolution and that the combined report had been available for quite some time.

47. **Ms. Amoah** (Ghana) pointed out that the report of the Secretary-General on the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, which was to be discussed on 31 October under agenda item 97 (f), had not yet been issued.

48. **Ms. Kelley** (Secretary of the Committee) said that various documents on the agenda item had been issued

already and would be made available to the Committee on 31 October, at which time a representative of the Secretariat would provide an oral report supplementing those documents.

49. **Mr. Ojimba** (Nigeria) took strong exception to the procedure and underscored his delegation's belief that documents must be available to delegations in sufficient time for them to prepare for the discussion of the relevant agenda items.

50. **Mr. Mwakapugi** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed dismay that many documents had not been available sufficiently in advance to allow delegations adequately to prepare for discussions and requested the Secretariat to clarify the status of all documents still to be issued.

51. **The Chairman** said that he would convey the views expressed concerning documentation to the Secretariat and would request a full explanation of the situation.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.